



## ***Healthy Legs, Happy Baby!***

There is relief for swollen ankles that also reduces your risk of varicose veins during pregnancy.

*Find out how you can help your legs!*

# ***Congratulations!***

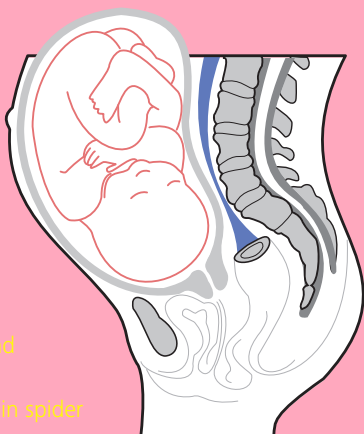
Pregnancy should be the happiest time of your life! Though this season may bring wonderful changes, it may bring some unwanted changes as well like swollen and tired legs and possibly varicose and spider veins. But no expectant mother should suffer through her pregnancy, and the good news is, you don't have to! With graduated compression, your legs can feel energized and look great throughout your entire pregnancy and beyond.

Pregnancy can play a role in the development of varicose and spider veins due to the many changes happening in your body. 30% of women pregnant for the first time and 55% of women who have had two or more full term pregnancies develop varicose veins.<sup>1</sup>

## ***Effects of Pregnancy on Your Body***

When you become pregnant, your body changes to accommodate your growing baby. Those changes include:

- Increased blood flow by 40% to 50%<sup>2</sup>
- Increased amounts of progesterone can cause your vein walls to dilate and loose elasticity
- Enhanced pressure on your pelvis can compress the iliac veins and obstruct venous flow resulting in swelling, leg discomfort and varicose veins
- Damaged veins may result in spider veins or varicose veins



<sup>1</sup> Swiss Medical Weekly 2001;131:659-662.

<sup>2</sup> PregnancyFacts.com

### ***Pregnancy and the Risk of DVT***

During and in the months following your pregnancy, you're at a higher risk of developing Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). This is a blood clot that can form in your calf that can block the flow of blood. Changes in hormone levels due to pregnancy can cause an increased blood coagulability. This is the measure of how easily blood clots. Additionally, the expanding uterus puts pressure on blood vessels, restricting and slowing the flow of blood from the legs and pelvis back up to the heart. Slow blood flow increases your chances of developing DVT. The increased risk will continue until after your body's hormone levels return to a pre-pregnancy state.<sup>3</sup>

A DVT can become dangerous if the blood clot breaks loose and travels to your lungs. This is known as a Pulmonary Embolism (PE) and can be deadly.

#### ***Symptoms of a DVT include:***

- Pain, tenderness and swelling in one leg
- Increased warmth and redness

Wearing graduated compression reduces the risk of DVT.<sup>4</sup> If you experience any of the above symptoms of a DVT, then seek immediate medical attention.

3 Physiology: Issue 9, (1998) 1–3; Physiological Changes Associated with Pregnancy.

4 Rabe E et al. Indications for Medical Compression Stockings in Venous and Lymphatic Disorders: An Evidence-based Consensus Statement. Phlebology 2018, Vol 33(3) 163-184

## *Understanding Your Veins*

Another potential side effect of pregnancy is the risk of varicose and spider veins. These varicosities occur when your blood doesn't flow properly causing reverse blood flow, also known as reflux. Reflux can stretch and damage vein walls which cause blood not to move as efficiently. Weakened and damaged veins don't move blood as well causing blood to pool. This leads to enlarged and distended veins called varicose veins. Varicose veins are among the most common vein disorders and are treatable once diagnosed by your doctor. Left untreated, they can lead to much more serious conditions like skin ulcers and painful swelling.

**The main symptoms of varicose veins include:**

- Noticeably large, gnarled veins under the surface of your skin
- Leg pain and swelling
- Throbbing
- Burning
- Restlessness



## ***Graduated Compression Benefits You and Baby***

Blood supplies your body, and your baby, with nutrients and oxygen while removing waste products. Your heart, arteries, and veins work together to facilitate healthy blood circulation, but when you have a venous disorder, blood isn't flowing the way it should be. Your calf muscles act as a "second" heart by moving blood back up to your heart through valves. When those valves become damaged or weakened, your blood doesn't circulate as it should. Wearing graduated compression can help improve circulation. But how? Graduated compression is greatest at your ankles and gradually decreases as it moves up your leg. It acts like an external layer of muscle encouraging your veins to do their job. Improving circulation can:

- Reduce swelling and tiredness in your legs and ankles
- Minimize your risk of developing varicose veins
- Revitalize your legs throughout the day

While wearing graduated compression socks or hosiery is a simple way to manage your symptoms, you can also:

- Avoid sitting or standing for prolonged periods of time
- Stay as active as you can while being safe
- When sitting or resting, elevate your legs
- Refrain from overheating as this can dilate your veins and cause swelling

**How Graduated  
Compression Works in  
Your Legs to Promote  
Better Blood Flow**

*Higher  
Compression at  
the Ankle*

*Decreasing  
Compression up  
the Leg*



## Styles to Fit You

The benefit of graduated compression is focused mostly in your ankle and calf so any style of compression can help provide relief. You don't have to fight to wear pantyhose in your third trimester because calf and thigh high styles will work just as well!

Clinical studies have shown that graduated compression stockings and hosiery should be a mainstay in relieving your symptoms of venous disorders during your pregnancy and beyond.\*

Products in the 15–20mmHg range are for prevention and for swollen, tired legs. Products in 20–30mmHg range and the 30–40mmHg range are for more moderate and severe symptoms.

### *Good News!*

Wearing graduated compression socks and hosiery daily improves circulation, which helps:



- Revitalize legs
- Minimize your risk of getting spider and varicose veins
- Energize your legs throughout the day
- Reduce leg swelling
- Prevents pooling of blood



\* 20–30mmHg.

## ***Self Assessment***

Still wondering if you're at risk? Take some time to answer these five questions about your leg health:

**Q:**

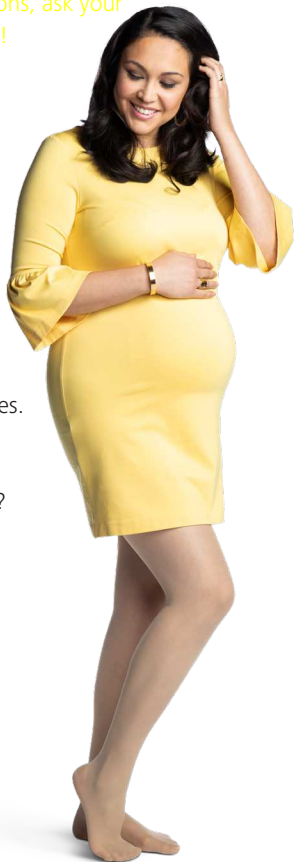
- Have you noticed any changes to your legs?
- Do you have spider veins in your legs?
- Does your work require you to sit or stand for long periods of time?
- Are your ankles swollen in the evening?
- Do your leg problems ease when you elevate your legs?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, ask your doctor if compression wear is right for you!

## ***Wondering what to ask your doctor?***

Start out with these three easy questions:

1. I've noticed my legs are starting to swell at night. What does this mean?
2. My legs feel tired and heavy sometimes. Should I be worried?
3. I want to prevent varicose veins from forming in my legs. How do I do that?



*Note:* Consult your physician to obtain a prescription for the appropriate SIGVARIS product and compression strength for your condition. Your health care provider will direct you to a local dealer, or you may visit our website for more locations: [sigvarisusa.com/find](https://sigvarisusa.com/find)

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